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12-14-06

RESOLUTION NO. _____

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Council adopts the City of Austin's Legislative Program for the 80th Regular Legislative Session as set forth in the attachment to this resolution.

ADOPTED _____, 2006

ATTEST: _____

Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk

DRAFT

City of Austin Legislative Program

For the 80th Legislature

General Principles

Austin supports legislation that enhances the City's ability to solve problems and improve the quality of life for its citizens. Austin opposes legislation that reduces the City's authority or increases the City's costs. Our aim is to work with other cities in a spirit of collaboration and teamwork. Austin will support the legislative positions of other cities and the Texas Municipal League when their positions are consistent with ours.

Departmental Legislative Program

SUPPORT

- Support legislation that allows expanding fuel hedging to include coal, nuclear fuel, and fuel transportation costs. These hedging instruments were not available in 1999 when the current law was enacted, allowing municipally owned utilities to hedge oil, gas and purchased power. (Austin Energy)
- Support legislation that provides grants for security improvements at airports including medium and large hub airports. Also support legislation that provides incentives for direct flights from smaller airports to Austin. (Aviation)
- Support budget and funding items related to retaining, restoring or increasing funds for primary healthcare. Includes any bills or budget items related to CHIP, Medicaid and other sources of healthcare funding. (Community Care and Health)
- Support funding for Healthcare Incubator Grants, which ultimately brings more funds into the state and offsets state and local expenses. (Community Care and Health)
- Support legislation restoring state human services agencies' prior funding level. Agencies were required to submit a budget reflecting 10% projected reduction. (Community Care and Health)
- Support increased funding for state mental health services delivered locally. (Community Care and Health)
- Support initiatives that would address shortage of medical providers across the state, particularly in Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHC) environments. (Community Care and Health)
- Support funding family planning services in a primary healthcare setting. (Community Care and Health)
- Support increases in funding to encourage healthcare providers to work in FQHC-type environments. Office of Community and Rural Affairs (ORCA) is undergoing sunset review.

and may be transferred to the Department of Agriculture ORCA administers the loan repayment program for healthcare providers working in underserved environments (Community Care and Health)

- Support legislation allowing the Travis County Health Care District to issue tax anticipation notes (Community Care and Health)
- Support state incentives for the film and television industry to make Texas more competitive with other states in attracting film business activity (Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services)
- Support creation of a company headquarters incentive at the state level (Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services)
- Support funding the Emerging Technology Fund (Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services)
- Support funding to the State Enterprise Fund (Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services)
- Support expanding the Rural Emergency Medical Dispatch pilot program to a full-fledged program so that Austin-Travis County EMS could apply to participate (Emergency Medical Services)
- Support legislation requiring the full disclosure of sales price information to the appraisal district (Finance, Budget and Audit)
- Support Legislation that allows all cities to obtain information from the state comptroller relating to the sales tax remittances made by specific remitters (Finance, Budget and Audit)
- Support increased funding for the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's Lone Star Libraries Program, which funds direct aid to local libraries (Library)
- Support legislation allowing Austin Municipal Court the option to use recording equipment rather than court reporters at trials. (Repeal Section 30 00737(d), Subchapter T, Chapter 37, Government Code) (Municipal Court)
- Support legislation providing additional planning tools and funding to cities along the SH 130 corridor. (Neighborhood Planning and Zoning and Watershed Protection)
- Support legislation that would provide stricter regulation of quarries and stone crushers relative to the threats they pose to water quality and quantity (Neighborhood Planning and Zoning and Watershed Protection)
- Support legislation directing the state sales tax from sporting goods ("sporting goods tax") for parks funding, both state and local (Parks and Recreation)
- Support legislation providing funding for local roadway construction and maintenance (Public Works and Traffic Management)
- Support legislation to establish the prima facie speed limited on residential streets at 25 MPH (Public Works and Traffic Management)

- Support legislation that would enable municipalities to publish bids electronically, rather than through newspapers (Purchasing)
- Support legislation requiring utility companies to pay for relocation of their facilities in a local government's right-of-way if relocation is necessary for the construction, maintenance, or repair of city infrastructure in the ROW (Telecom & Regulatory Affairs)
- Support the continued authority of cities to regulate the use of their rights-of-way and to collect reasonable rental fees for their use. (Telecom & Regulatory Affairs)
- Support maintaining the City's authority over special districts in its ETJ (Water Utility)
- Support the continued seniority of in-basin water rights. (Water Utility)
- Support legislation that protects the rights of municipalities regarding Certificates of Convenience and Necessity so that urban standards are achieved (Water Utility)
- Support legislation that sets higher water conservation standards for plumbing fixtures, better irrigation and landscape practices, and allowing cities to preempt HOA requirements (Water Utility)

MONITOR

- Monitor legislation related to the electric utility industry and take action as needed to protect our interests. Oppose any legislation that would negatively affect local control, increase costs to AE customers or that would change the status quo regarding electric restructuring (Austin Energy)
- Monitor legislation concerning elections and record management for unfunded mandates. If filing of additional documents of any sort is required, electronic filing as an option should be allowed (City Clerk)
- Monitor patient privacy legislation for conflicts or complications with the City's compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA). (Emergency Medical Services)
- Monitor and take appropriate action on legislation resulting from the Senate Interim State Affairs Committee charge to "Study and make recommendations regarding the cost drivers of emergency medical services. Make recommendations on how to improve and sustain EMS services for Texas as well as reduce costs to health care plans, businesses, and individuals" (Emergency Medical Services)
- Monitor legislation allowing the splitting of awards to multiple vendors for the same product or service even though not all are the lowest bidder when a single vendor is unable to provide the product or service in the time allowed. (Purchasing)

OPPOSE

- Oppose legislation lowering the rollback rate or imposing revenue caps. (Finance, Budget and Audit)
- Oppose legislation that would create unfunded mandated increases to employee pension programs by the City (Budget, Finance and Audit)

- Oppose legislation that would reduce cities' authority to protect the environment. (Neighborhood Planning and Zoning and Watershed Protection)
- Oppose legislation that would reduce the cities' existing zoning authority or reduce the municipal annexation and ETJ authority (Neighborhood Planning and Zoning and Watershed Protection)
- Oppose legislation prohibiting automated enforcement of traffic lights (Police)
- Oppose legislation creating new unfunded mandates. (Budget, Finance and Audit)
- Oppose legislation that would overturn existing franchise agreements. (Telecom & Regulatory Affairs)
- Oppose legislation that would reduce Austin's water rights or would reduce future water resource options. (Water Utility)

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Staff Proposals for Possible Additions to Legislative Program

SUPPORT

- Support legislation requiring new coal plants to use improved technology rather than coal-crushing technology (Austin Energy)
- Support legislation allowing the City to withhold completed appraisal reports during negotiations to purchase land (Public Works and Traffic Management)
- Support legislation promoting energy efficiency and conservation, development of renewable energy, and reducing greenhouse gases
- Support legislation amending Chapter 373A, Local Government Code, to strengthen affordable housing tools in a Homestead Preservation District
- Support legislation modifying the Cap Metro board to increase the City's proportional representation to reflect actual ridership by City residents
- Support legislation adopting California emission standards for new automobiles and light trucks
- Support legislation modifying the Housing Tax Credit Program Qualified Allocation Plan to allow use of tax credits for mixed income housing projects

MONITOR

- Monitor legislation modifying the Capitol View Corridors
- Monitor legislation related to immigration

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